Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C.

In the Matter of CellCo Partnership d/b/a)	
Verizon Wireless and Spectrum Co LLC)	
For Consent to Assign Licenses)	
)	WT Docket No. 12-4
Application of Cellco Partnership d/b/a)	
Verizon Wireless and Cox TMI Wireless, LLL)	
For Consent to Assign Licenses)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF SYRACUSE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Legislator Monica Williams
Councilor Bob Dougherty
Councilor Helen Hudson
Councilor Jean Kessner
School Board President Burrill Wells
Central New York Area Labor Federation
CWA Local 1123
CWA Local 1152
IUPAT District Council #4
SEIU Local 200 United

1199 SEIU Upstate
United Steelworkers of America International Union
United Steelworkers Local 01430
Citizen Action of Central New York

Citizen Action of the Southern Tier

Syracuse Peace Council

Syracuse United Neighbors

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Syracuse Pastor Kevin Agee, Hopps Memorial CME Church Julio Urrutia

Dated: March 26, 2012

As elected officials, community organizations, and local leaders in the City of Syracuse and surrounding region, we are deeply concerned that the proposed partnership between Verizon Wireless and the cable companies under the SpectrumCo umbrella will leave our city – and other communities like it – on the wrong side of the digital divide. Despite what we consider a strong business case, Verizon has to date not built its all-fiber network in the city of Syracuse. As a result of the Verizon/cable company partnership, we are deeply concerned that Verizon will never build its FiOS network in Syracuse to compete with its new cable partner. This will deprive our citizens, small businesses, schools, and health care facilities of the benefits of the all-fiber FiOS network and video competition that is available in most of the surrounding suburbs. The decision to bypass Syracuse disproportionately impacts minority and lower-income residents and neighborhoods.

In order to protect the public interest, we join together to urge the FCC to require conditions on any approval of the Verizon-cable transaction. Specifically, we request guarantees that Verizon will expand its FiOS network to currently un- and under-served areas within its traditional telephone network footprint, including development throughout the city of Syracuse and the surrounding areas that do not have access to FiOS.

Legislator Monica Williams represents the 16th District of the Onondaga County

Legislature. Councilor Bob Dougherty represents the 3rd District of the Syracuse Common

Council. Councilor Helen Hudson is an At-Large member of the Syracuse Common Council.

Councilor Jean Kessner is an At-Large member of the Syracuse Common Council. Burrill Wells is the President of the Board of Education for the Baldwinsville Central School District.

The Central New York Area Labor Federation represents over 100,000 members of 200 local unions in eleven Central New York counties with the mission of the of improving the lives

of working families—bringin economic justice to the workplace and social justice to New York State and the nation. The Communications Workers of America Local 1123 represents Verizon workers in the Syracuse area. The Communications Workers of America Local 1152 represents AT&T workers in the Syracuse area. The International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council #4 represents painters, tapers, glaziers, glass workers, billboard posters, wall coverers, printing press workers in Western and Central New York. Service Employees Internation Union Local 200 United represents over 15,000 direct care workers and nurses, administrative assistants and secretaries, teaching assistants, food service workers, bus drivers, EMS professionals, municipal workers, security guards, janitors, buildings and grounds keepers, maintenance workers, ticket takers and ushers, cemetery workers, and parking attendants throughout the state of New York. The Upstate Division of 1199 Service Employees Internataional Union is the voice of health care employees in western, central, and northern New York State and includes more than 17,000 health care workers at 20 hospitals and over 45 nursing homes as registered nurses, hospital workers, and nursing home workers. The United Steelworkers of America International Union represents over 1.2 million active and retired members in the manufacturing, service, education, medical, and public sector jobs. The United Steelworkers of America Local 01430 represents Syracuse-area workers in the manufacturing, service, education, medical, and public sector jobs.

Citizen Action of New York is a grassroots membership organization that takes on big issues at the center of transforming American society, building a powerful coalition to fight for economic, racial, social and environmental justice. The Syracuse Peace Council is social justice organization that challenges the existing unjust power relationships among nations, among people, and between ourselves and the environment. Syracuse United Neighbors is a grassroots

community organization dedicated to improving the lives of families living in the neighborhoods on the south, sothwest, and near-west sides of Syracuse, NY. The Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance (IMA) is a non-profit, faith-based ecumenical association of over thirty African American and multi-ethnic congregations in Central New York whose mission includes the goal of making neighborhoods safe and enhancing the quality of life for youth and residents. Rev. Kevin Agee is the pastor of Hopps Memorial CME Church in the City of Syracuse's Southside neighborhood. Julio Urrutia is a lawyer in the Syracuse area who serves on the Executive Boards of several local community organizations.

High-speed broadband is the critical infrastructure of the 21st century, fueling economic growth, job creation, and improvements in education, health care, energy conservation, public safety, and other essential services. We know that affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet access is critical to economic development, the quality of life, and opportunity for the residents and small businesses in our city. We also know that advanced telecommunications networks introduce video competition, with the potential to benefit consumers with lower prices and new and improved video services.

Over the past few years, we have watched as Verizon Communications has built its allfiber FiOS network in fourteen¹ suburban communities that neighbor the City of Syracuse. In
those communities, we have seen what happens when traditional cable companies are forced to
compete head-on with Verizon's FiOS network to provide television and broadband services.

Consumers benefit from competitive choice; small businesses benefit from truly high-speed
connections to suppliers and customers; schools and hospitals benefit from education and health-

¹ Franchises have been negotiated with the following municipalities in Central New York: Town of Baldwinsville, Town of Camillus, Town of Cicero, Town of Clay, Town of Dewitt, Village of Fayetteville, Town of Geddes, Town of Liverpool, Town of Lysander, Town of Salina, Town of Skaneateles, and Town of Van Buren

related applications; communications workers benefit from the jobs building, maintaining, and servicing networks; and families and communities benefit from the 21st century jobs and expanded tax base.

But to date, the residents and small businesses in Syracuse have not been able to reap these benefits. That is because Verizon has chosen not to deploy its end-to-end FiOS fiber optic network throughout the City of Syracuse. Though some small sections of the City have limited FiOS access – the profitable University area in particular – fewer than 10% of Syracuse residents are able to take advantage of it. The suburban municipalities and limited areas of the City where FiOS has been made available are already more affluent and less divers than Syracuse as a whole; more than 70% of minority population of Onondaga County resides within the City of Syracuse. Now these communities are being given even more technological advantages while the city is again left behind. *The decision to bypass Syracuse, the urban core of Central New York, disproportionately impacts minority and lower-income residents, small businesses, and neighborhoods.*

The proposed partnership between Verizon and the cable companies will cement this Digital Divide, and foreclose the possibility of effective high-speed broadband and video competition in our city. We are deeply concerned that as a result of the new joint marketing agreement, Verizon will no longer have the incentive to invest in an all-fiber network that competes with Verizon's new business partner, the cable company. Therefore, to promote high-speed broadband investment and video competition, especially in heavily minority and lower-income areas like the City of Syracuse, the FCC should include as a condition for approval of this transaction a requirement that Verizon continue to invest in and build-out its FiOS

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

network to currently unserved areas that are inside its traditional telephone service area footprint, including the City of Syracuse and the surrounding areas.

We are concerned that the agreement between Verizon and the cable companies effectively sounds the death knell of a fiber-optic future for Syracuse with our significant minority and lower-income population. Verizon is unlikely to jeopardize its partnership with the cable companies by expanding the FiOS network, which is a direct cable competitor. The same reasoning applies to Verizon's willingness to aggressively market FiOS against Time Warner Cable or other cable companies. Historic rivals will become partners – and consumers will suffer.

The lack of a fiber optic network has serious consequences for Syracuse's future, including but not limited to the following:

- No cable competition. If Verizon does not build FiOS, Time Warner will maintain its monopoly in Syracuse.
- No jobs from building FiOS. Building, installing and maintaining the FiOS network in Syracuse requires hundreds of workers.
- No jobs from economic development sparked by a high-speed network broadband access leads to economic development.³
- Higher prices. As FCC studies demonstrate, even one wire line competitor leads to lower prices.⁴
- Inferior service quality. Monopoly providers can neglect service quality because they do not face competitive pressure.

High speed internet service is no longer a luxury. In today's economy, it is a necessity.

The FCC should condition any approval of this Transaction on conditions that guarantee FiOS

5

³ An analysis by the Canadian firm SNG found that for every dollar spent on broadband infrastructure there is a tenfold return to the community in increased economic activity. See Michael Curri, Strategic Networks Group. "The Transformative Effects of FTTP" (March 2008) available at http://tinyurl.com/6m9cfw

⁴ See FCC, Report on Cable Industry Prices, MM Docket No 92-255, Feb. 14, 2011.

network development, including development throughout the city of Syracuse and the surrounding areas that do not have access to FiOS.

Respectfully Submitted,

March 26, 2012